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ABSTRACT

This report describes efforts of the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources to promote the teaching of hunting, fishing, and trapping skills. It is part of a three-pronged approach to assure the future of these activities in the state that will also include scientific management of fish and game resources and an analysis of factors and issues relating to public interest and Department interactions. This report deals only with the skills element. The Department's internal "Skills Team" used public participation to develop the following five program areas for initial implementation: (1) support sporting club efforts to teach skills; (2) increase opportunities to use Department lands for skills training activities; (3) improve skills training opportunities outreach to youth; (4) provide an information clearinghouse to publicize club events and skills training opportunities; and (5) increase the visibility of hunting, fishing, and trapping as recreation. The program entails major partnerships with organizations, businesses, and individuals interested in assuring the future of these outdoor activities. Surveys and other public feedback indicated that, while the public schools are probably not the best places to teach hunting, fishing, and trapping skills, the teaching of scientifically sound resource management and resource use should be supported. It is anticipated that program activities will be adjusted to improve effectiveness and ensure efficiency of state fund use and volunteer efforts. (RAH)

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ED 379 125

A PROGRAM TO PROMOTE THE LEARNING OF

Hunting, Fishing and Trapping Skills

IN WISCONSIN

Prepared by:

The Skills Team

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

May 12, 1994

PUB. NO. IE161 94
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May 12, 1994

To the Sportsmen and Women of Wisconsin:

I am very pleased to initiate the Department of Natural Resources' program to promote the teaching of hunting, fishing and trapping skills in Wisconsin. This report is a beginning. After you read it, I need your ideas about ways we can improve this program.

Our great state has a long and proud heritage of protecting, managing and wisely using the abundant fish and game resources of the land.

At one time learning to hunt and fish was a natural part of life in our state. As Wisconsin becomes more urbanized, we have become more removed from daily interaction with the land and waters of this state. Opportunities to learn the skills needed to enjoy these forms of recreation also have become more removed for our citizens.

I am asking you to work with us to change this situation.

Everyone who is interested in the outdoors should have the opportunities to learn and practice the skills needed to cast a fly to a rising trout, to call in a tom turkey, to still-hunt deer, or to understand the ecological interconnectedness of mink and muskrat tracks in the marsh mud.

I know that you share my concerns and I am excited at the opportunities for our Department to work with you and build partnerships to ensure a bright future for hunting, fishing and trapping in Wisconsin.

I hope that you enjoy reading this report, and please let us know how we can assist you in helping to keep hunting, fishing and trapping a vital part of Wisconsin's culture.

Sincerely,

George E. Meyer

George E. Meyer
Secretary

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Summary

As part of a comprehensive effort to assure the future of hunting, fishing and trapping in Wisconsin, the Department of Natural Resources has developed a program to encourage the teaching and learning of skills associated with these recreational pursuits.

The Department established an internal "Skills Team" and using general forms of public participation over nine months, developed five program areas for implementation:

I. Support sporting club efforts to teach skills.

II. Increase opportunities to use Department lands for skills training activities.

III. Improve skills training opportunities outreach to youth.

IV. Provide an information clearinghouse to publicize club events and skills training opportunities.

V. Increase the visibility of hunting, fishing and trapping as recreation.

This program calls for major partnerships with organizations, businesses and individuals interested in assuring the future of hunting, fishing and trapping. As experience is gained, program activities will be adjusted to improve their effectiveness and to ensure efficiency in using state funds and the many hours of volunteer effort that will be invested in making this program successful.

Department funding and staff for this initiative will come from adjustment of existing staff time and budgets, and from future biennial budget requests.

The Department clearly recognizes that the key to success of the skills initiative will be in working with the strong volunteer and partnership spirit that exists among Wisconsin's sportswomen and men.

Acknowledgements

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources wishes to thank all the people who took time to give us their ideas, perspectives and concerns. A project like this can only be successful if time is taken to listen and carefully consider each idea and comment. Our efforts to gather information from users around the state took three forms:

Questionnaires:

Thanks to the 119 people who took the time to read and complete our questionnaires. These responses were the foundation from which the committee's plans began to take shape.

Listening Sessions:

On two sunny Saturdays in October 1993, interested hunters and anglers showed their sincere interest in this issue by attending one of two listening sessions. Information gained from these sessions helped clarify our direction. We owe special thanks to those people who took their Saturday to attend a session and give us feedback.

Waukesha Listening Session:

Roger Fischer ..... West Allis
Ken Barbian ..... Brookfield
Francis Jakimczyk ..... Milwaukee
Russell Herschlein ..... Milwaukee
Carl Strelitzer ..... Milwaukee
Randy Krenn ..... Milwaukee
James G. Lillis ..... Wauwatosa
Ted Lind ..... Milwaukee
Dave Katzeyer ..... Waukesha
Gen Ebert ..... Waukesha
Carl Anderson ..... Oregon
Warren DeSmidt ..... Cedarburg
Warren Zain ..... Milwaukee
Greg Kazmierski ..... Waukesha
Chester Ceville ..... Milwaukee
Pauline Koszuta ..... Milwaukee

Wausau Listening Session:

Earl V. Weisensel ..... Madison
Jim Eid ..... Park Falls
Ruel Fleming ..... Herbster
Terry Eichmann ..... Nelsonville
Don Hildebrandt ..... Wausau
Chuck Skolor ..... Abbotsford
Phil Zipp ..... Wausau
Josh Coates ..... Merrill
Joel Coates ..... Merrill
Charles G. Coates ..... Merrill
Bill J. Sherer ..... Boulder Junction
Cynthia S. Halverson ..... Spooner

Kitchen Cabinet:

Eighteen people were invited to participate as a special advisory group, we affectionately called our "Kitchen Cabinet." These eighteen special people were chosen based on their interests in hunting and fishing, their diversity of backgrounds and experiences, and their willingness to help us determine the Future of Hunting, Fishing and Trapping in Wisconsin. These people and their affiliations are listed below.

Cindy Lembke
Wi Council of Sportfishing Organizations

Eric Skindzelewski
Lakeshore Fishermen's Club

Chuck Rolfsmeyer
Madison Fishing Expo

Terry Eichmann
Glacier Hollow Instructor

Ronald Roettger
Conservation Congress

Connie Pribnow
Hunter Education

Clem Schwartz
Lakeshore Fishermen's Org.

Sterling Strathe
Sheboygan Co. Skills Ctr.

Roy Seybald
Izaak Walton League

Christine Thomas
UW Stevens Point

Mike Widner
Wisconsin Trappers' Assoc

Gen Ebert
WI Sportswomen's Club

Scott Sager
Hunter Ed. Instr.

Russell Hitz
Conservation Congress

Charmaine Adolph
Safari Club Int.

Scott R. Craven
UWEX-Wildlife

Terry Koper
Milwaukee Sentinel

Milton McPike
High School Principal

Thank You All

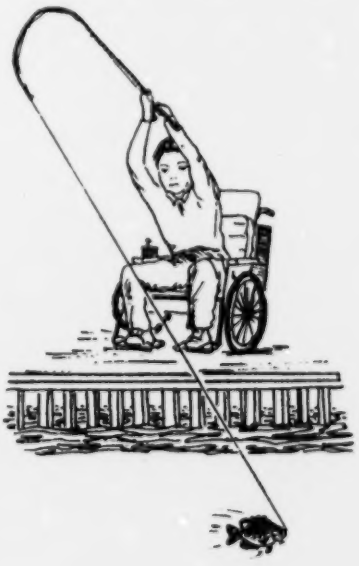
The Department Skills Team

Oversight Support Team

Jim Addis	*Division of Resource Management*
John Fryatt	*Division of Law Enforcement*

Project Team Members

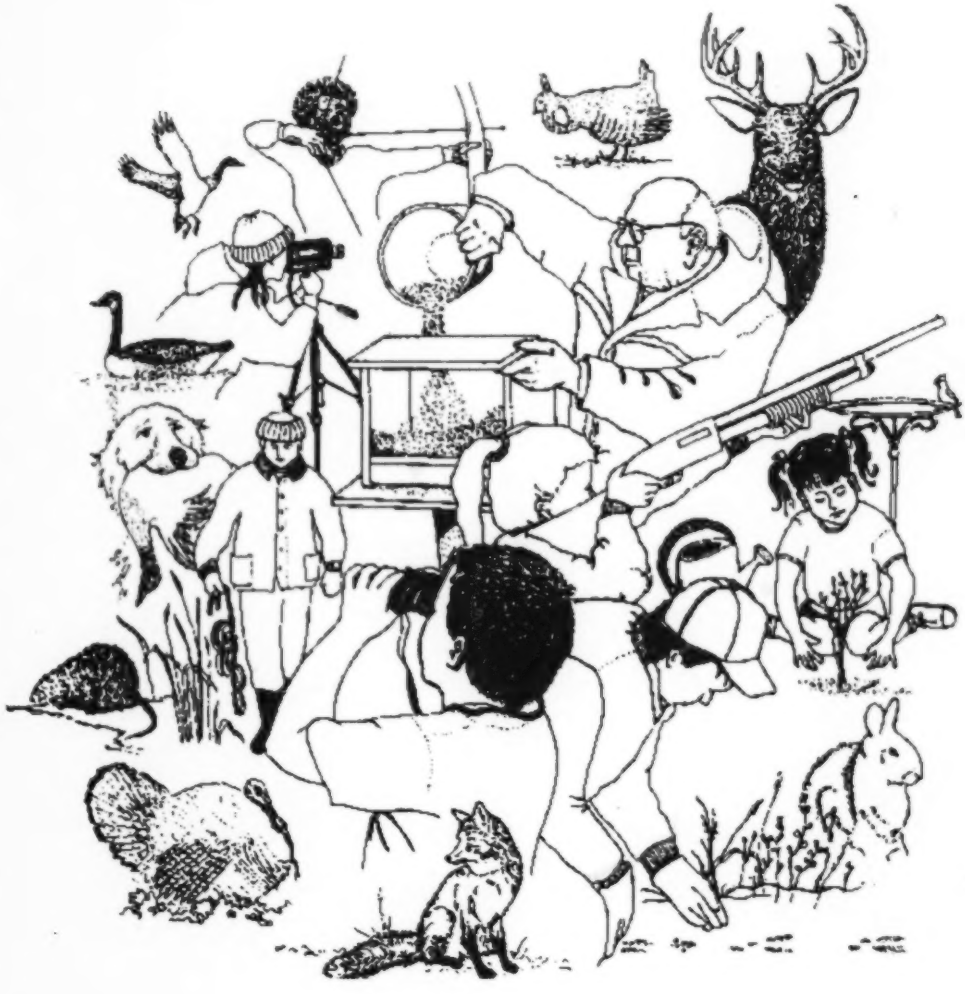
Steve Miller	*Co-Chair, Resource Management*
Tom Thoresen	*Co-Chair, Law Enforcement*
Pat Sheahan	*Facilitator*
Ralph Christensen	*Law Enforcement*
Cathy Cliff	*Information and Education*
Tom Hauge	*Wildlife Management*
Mary K. Judd	*Wildlife Management*
Lee Kernen	*Fisheries Management*
Carole Lee	*Fisheries Management*
Laurie Osterndorf	*Parks*
Laurel Steffes	*Information and Education*



Purpose and Mission of the Skills Initiative

To design and implement beginning in May, 1994, a cooperative hunting, fishing and trapping skills education program that will:

- Assure that all interested Wisconsin youth and adults have opportunities to learn hunting, fishing and trapping skills as well as related outdoor skills such as orienteering, camping and outdoor cooking.
- Foster land stewardship ethics as first articulated by Aldo Leopold.
- Create partnerships that will build on, support and enhance access to established hunter education and outdoor skills programs.



Introduction and Overview

This project was initiated under the direction of Secretary George Meyer who is committed to the goal of assuring the future of hunting, fishing and trapping in Wisconsin, and has made that goal a major focus for his administration. The Department will be addressing the future of these recreational pursuits using a three-pronged effort. Each will be studied and a separate report prepared.

The first element is to study the scientific management of fish and game resources in Wisconsin and to assess the Department's capability to meet the current scientifically accepted standards for management in the 1990s and beyond.

The second element is to analyze the factors that contribute to or inhibit interest in hunting and fishing, the identification of key issues relating to the way the Department interacts with the public on hunting and fishing and the analysis of changes occurring in society which will affect the long term future of hunting, fishing and trapping.

The third element is this skill initiative.

This report deals only with the skills element.

The procedures and major conclusions used in this project are reported in the "Background" section of this report. The five "Program Areas" identified for implementation cover the range of issues and concerns resulting from the public participation process. The "Planned Actions" are specific implementation steps within each Program Area.

A comprehensive effort to help interested youth and adults to learn to hunt, fish and trap is a major commitment. When coupled with emphasis on the scientific management of fish and game resources, and human dimensions of resource use, the Department is clearly demonstrating its commitment to the future of hunting, fishing and trapping in the State of Wisconsin.

This skills program is the beginning of what must be a dynamic effort for the Department of Natural Resources. All of the planned actions call for improving partnerships with organizations and individuals interested in assuring the future of hunting, fishing and trapping. As experience is gained, the actions will be adjusted to improve their effectiveness and to assure efficiency in the use of state funds and the many hours of volunteer effort that will be invested into making this program successful.

The Department fully recognizes that the key to the future of hunting and fishing rests with the thousands of committed outdoors women and men who will be devoting their time, knowledge and abilities to this effort. It is only through the efforts of these sportsmen and women, individually and working in organizations, that the cultural traditions of hunting and fishing, so valued in Wisconsin today, will be conveyed to future generations and still be valued in the decades to come.

A major foundational theme in this program, is that hunting, fishing and trapping can be life-long pursuits that grow richer and more meaningful with time. Participating in these activities draws people closer to the land and water, and develops within them a sense of wonder for the diversity of plant and animal life around them. Hunters, anglers and trappers have long been at the forefront of the environmental conservation movement. Participation in these activities develops a deep, active interest to enhance the future of fish, wildlife and their habitats, thereby helping to assure the continued stewardship of these resources in Wisconsin and the nation.

Description of the Program Areas and Planned Actions

Program Area I: Support sporting club efforts to teach skills.

The strong commitment of many sportswomen and men, and the organizations they represent, to conduct skills training activities was continually reaffirmed during the meetings and surveys of the Skills Team. The Department was repeatedly advised to use its skills program to build upon and support this outstanding record of community service. Supporting the efforts of Wisconsin's outdoor sporting clubs is the first priority in the skills program because it is viewed as fundamental to the future of hunting, fishing and trapping in the state.

A number of major areas were identified which will enhance the ability of individual volunteers and organizations to actively participate in skills training: access to materials, basic funding, liability insurance coverage, partnership, and mentoring.

Many volunteers want instructional materials more available for their use. The Department, however, was cautioned not to engaged in the production of original material unless necessary. It was noted that a wide variety of instructional material already exists, and the Department was advised to facilitate getting this material to the individuals who need it. Existing materials can be adapted to Wisconsin as needed. Specialized materials focusing on women, minorities and the physically disabled may need further development.

The key ingredient in skills training is the volunteer time of committed sportsmen and women who currently conduct skills activities without Department financial assistance. While this volunteer spirit and commitment is strong, it appears the overall effort can be helped further if some funds were available on a matching basis. Department assistance with materials, food and supply costs would be greatly appreciated and viewed as a partnership effort.

Potential liability for volunteer sponsors of events is a major concern. Organizations and individuals want the Department to resolve this concern by clarifying their liability and exploring the opportunity to obtain liability insurance at a reasonable cost.

The Department was also advised to effectively reach out to businesses and organizations which share an interest in promoting and teaching hunting and fishing skills. These groups include outdoor sporting goods retailers and manufacturers, and youth organizations such as Boy and Girl Scouts, 4-H and Future Farmers of America. These businesses and organizations have access to facilities, equipment and financial resources that can be matched up with hunting and fishing clubs. The Department's role can be that of a facilitator in constructing partnerships between these groups which have a common interest in the future of hunting, fishing and trapping.

Mentoring is another major area in which the Department can support the ongoing effort of sporting clubs. The sporting organizations of Wisconsin include experienced hunters, anglers and trappers who have the time and interest in passing on their proficiency and love of the outdoors. The state also has many youth and novice hunters and anglers who need guidance and someone to take them. A major opportunity exists for assisting sporting organizations to develop mentoring programs within their local communities.

A final area in which the Department can act as a facilitator is in working with organizations to sponsor school teachers, environmental center instructors, youth and others in attending workshops, summer programs, camps, etc. that teach hunting, angling and other outdoor skills. A wide variety of these types of programs exist. Sporting clubs can have a significant impact in their local area by promoting attendance at these programs by helping to defray the cost of attendance. The Department can help clubs be aware of these programs so they can decide on how to participate.

Planned Actions and Timetable:

1) The Department will increase the availability of ready-to-use instructional materials for hunting, fishing, trapping and hunter education using existing materials or by adapting available materials as needed. The status of materials in the Department at present is:

Hunting:

Turkey (currently available)

Dog training (currently available)

Gun deer hunting (in preparation)

Waterfowl and Goose Hunting (in preparation)

Pheasants (in planning)

Small Game (in planning)

Archery deer hunting (in planning)

Muzzle loading hunting (in planning)

Bear (in planning)

How to Conduct Skills Field Activities (in planning)

How to Organize a Hunting or Fishing Camp (in planning)

Trapping: (currently available)

Fishing:

Junior and Master Angler Programs (currently available)

Ice Fishing (in planning)

Fly Fishing (in planning)

General Hunter Education: (currently available)

It's important to note that the basic Hunter Education program will not be changed. This is a highly successful program and is required of all hunters born after January 1, 1973.

Timetable: Continued development through 1996 with updates and reprinting thereafter.

2) The Department will develop a matching grant program for clubs and other organizational sponsors of skills activities.

Timetable: Develop granting procedures and amounts in 1994-95.

Initiate grants funding with 1995-97 budget.

3) The Department will provide advice and assistance on adequate liability coverage for organizations sponsoring skills training events.

Timetable: Investigate liability issue—underway in Spring 1994

4) The Department will facilitate building partnerships between sporting goods manufacturers and retailers, skills instructors, sporting and youth organizations

Timetable: Initiate in 1994.

5) The Department will assist development of mentoring programs, encouraging experienced hunters, anglers and trappers to help youth and others learn and develop the necessary skills to participate in hunting, fishing and trapping. To do this the Department will:

   a) Prepare written and audio visual materials to help interested experienced hunters, anglers and trappers share their skills.

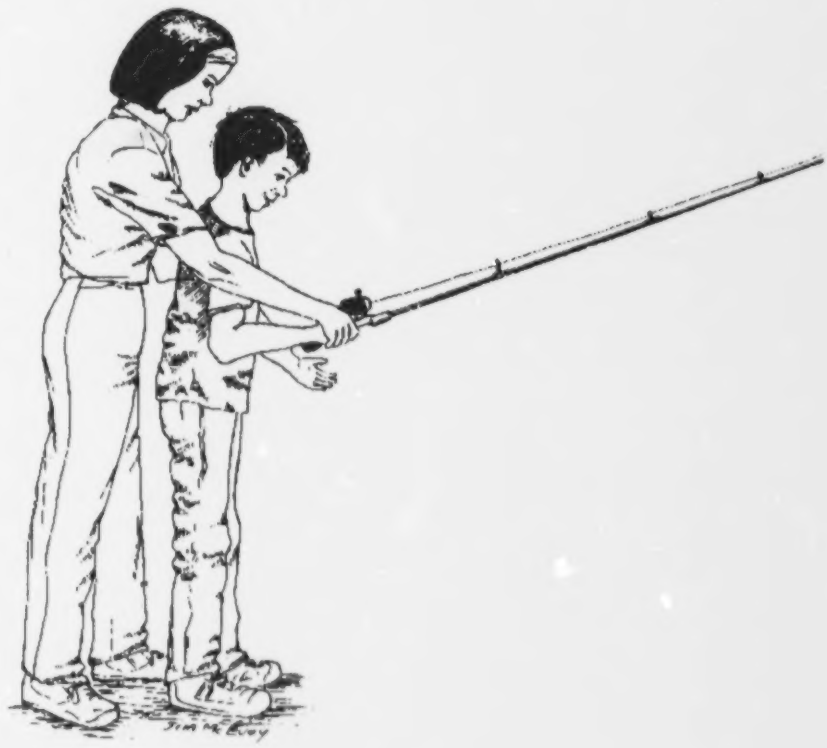
   b) Encourage the outdoor news media to promote skills mentoring in their publications and programs.

   c) Work with interested outdoor sports organizations to establish mechanisms for interested sportsmen and women to be matched with youth and others who want to learn how to hunt and fish but have no one to take them.

   Timetable: Develop basic materials and establish initial working relationships by December 1995.

6) Work with organizations to sponsor attendance at workshops, summer programs, camps, etc, that teach hunting and fishing skills.

   Timetable: Begin immediately.



Program Area II

Increase opportunities to use Department lands for skills training activities.

Most respondents strongly indicated the Department should make better use of its existing properties as places to teach skills. They felt the Department should obtain the authority to conduct more educational hunts on public lands. This authority should include: allowing special hunts before or after normally designated seasons; reserving portions of a property for special hunts; allowing special hunts for youth or other designated groups of people; permitting the hunts to be conducted by volunteers; and the authority to charge a fee to cover the costs of conducting the special hunts.

They also requested the Department allow hunting and fishing organizations to use Department lands to conduct field activities and skills clinics. And, lastly, they felt the Department should provide for more safe target shooting opportunities on its lands.

Planned Actions and Timetable.

1) The Department will seek the necessary statutory and administrative rule authority to conduct educational hunting, fishing and trapping activities on state properties.

   Timetable: Obtain statutory authority in 1995;

   Develop administrative rules specifying properties by early 1996;

   Develop needed educational materials, and

   Conduct first hunts in Fall 1996.

2) The Department will make its lands more available for sponsor organizations to conduct field activities and skills clinics in association with hunter education and learn-to-hunt activities.

   Timetable: Develop necessary administrative rules and choose properties by July 1, 1995;

   Develop cooperative agreements with interested organizations by August 1, 1995

3) The Department will develop guidelines for expanding target shooting opportunities at designated sites on its lands.

   Timetable: Develop guidelines by July 1, 1995.

Program Area III Improve skills training opportunities outreach to youth.

Survey results indicated that hunters and anglers would like the Department to be active in working with school systems and youth organizations. Many feel that the roles of hunting and fishing in our culture and history are not adequately explained in the school systems. There is a perception, which has not been verified, that anti-hunting and anti-resource management materials are not adequately balanced by pro-hunting and pro-resource management information.

Many Department employees already spend time in the classroom as resource people for teachers, as parents and as part of their jobs. We can improve on this existing activity by: focusing on the basic messages the Department wants emphasized in these visits, training Department staff about teaching techniques, training cooperators about basic teaching skills and learning styles of children, and developing schoolroom teaching aides and materials to enhance the effectiveness of the visits.

Examples of where the Department has already made a commitment to a coordinated approach are: The Bureau of Law Enforcement's plans to annually visit every 5th grade class in the state; the Bureau of Forestry's staff training in classroom and child learning behavior as a precursor to their presenting a consistent message on forest management; and the Bureau of Parks and Recreation's including a skills component in the parks teacher study guides.

The Skills Team also received a lot of opinions about what might work to solve perceived problems of decline in interest and increased opposition to hunting, fishing and trapping. Although research indicates a growing intolerance to some of these activities, additional social research is needed to enable the Department to shape its activities based upon the needs and concerns of teachers, students and parents. Some research subject opportunities are: How can the Department best work with teachers and school administrators?, Should hunting and fishing be part of broader messages about cultural diversity?

The Skills Team was also asked to consider ways in which sportsmen and women can actively participate in school presentations. Development of materials, visual aids and some instruction in teaching skills and child behavior would greatly enhance the ability of interested individuals to serve as resource persons in school districts. The Conservation Congress has specifically requested this type of program be developed for use by County Congress delegates.

Planned Actions and Timetable:

1) The Department will improve its existing skills outreach to schools.

   New initiatives to be developed are:

   a) Materials that focus on hunting and fishing in Project WILD and Project Learning Tree training, and some advanced workshops on these topics and issues for educators.

   b) Promotion of hunting and fishing as recreational opportunities through current networks of school and teacher contacts.

   c) Give focussed messages to school groups visiting Department properties to point out how management of these lands contribute to hunting and fishing as well as sound land stewardship.

   d) Share information on the importance of conservation, hunting and fishing in ethnic and cultural backgrounds of Wisconsin citizens to encourage understanding of state hunting, fishing and trapping traditions.

   e) Develop a coloring book for preschoolers focusing on skills and attitudes.

   Timetable: Some initiatives are underway in 1994. The others will take additional time to plan and implement during 1994 and 1995.

2) The Department will research how to effectively work with schools on this issue.

   Timetable: Research study planning begins in Fall, 1994 with teacher focus group projects.

3) The Department will chart new pathways of cooperation by choosing a few new directions to involve schools, teachers and youth that traditionally are not reached with the Department's hunting and fishing skills messages:

   a) Develop workshops and presentations on skills for groups of teachers who have opportunities to teach about hunting and fishing issues and/or skills such as: vocational agriculture, physical education, social studies, science, and biology.

   b) Develop networks with Department of Public Instruction educational consultants (i.e.; Environmental Education. Science, Social Studies, etc.) to better infuse positive discussions of hunting and fishing and related skills into state primary and secondary education system.

   c) Develop a recognition mechanism for teachers who teach skills and/or the acceptance of hunting and fishing. Recognition should take place in front of their peers at professional meetings.

   Timetable: Develop workshops, initiate networks—Begin active development Fall, 1994.

4) Work with the Conservation Congress to develop program materials and training for in-school presentations for Congress Delegates and others.

   Timetable: Initiate in 1994.

Program Area IV

Provide an information clearinghouse function to publicize club events and skills training opportunities.

There are a number of individuals and organizations already conducting outstanding skills clinics and education activities. They've suggested the Department can be of additional service by publicizing their events. Currently, there is no central repository of skills training information. Interested individuals cannot easily obtain information on what activities are occurring in various parts of the state.

Planned Actions and Timetable.

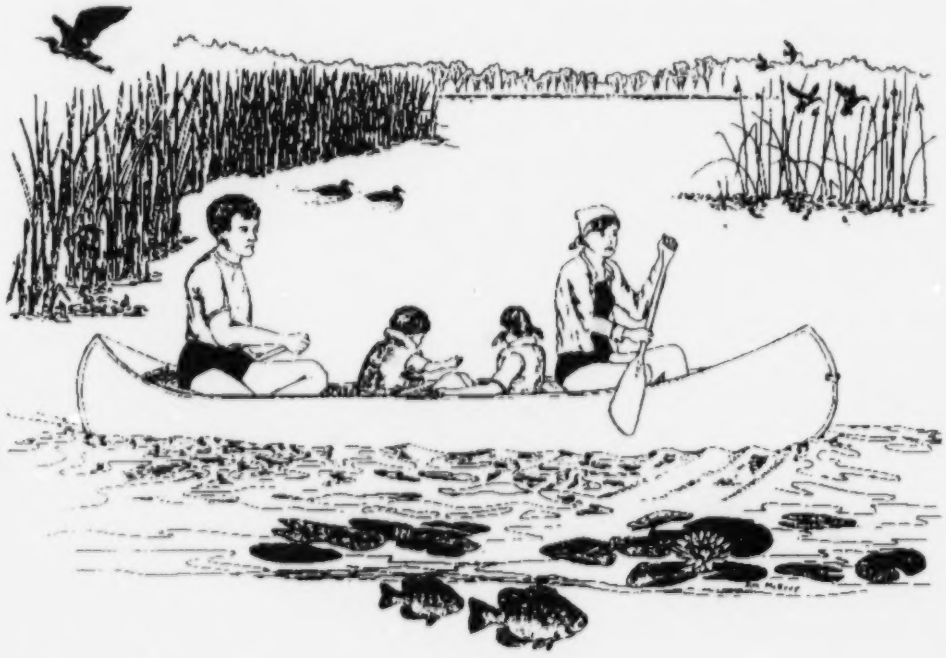
1) Establish an information clearinghouse within the Department to publicize hunting, fishing and trapping skills opportunities. This will include:

   a) A statewide information base of skills training opportunities operated from a central control point, with District and field office access;

   b) A single phone number (possibly toll free) to call for information;

   c) Publication of weekly lists for media use.

   Timetable: establish by June 1996



Program Area V

Increase visibility of hunting, fishing and trapping as recreation.

The Skills Team heard repeatedly that the Department should do more to promote the visibility of hunting, fishing and trapping as recreational pursuits. Some individuals felt the Department was not placing as much emphasis in support of these activities as it once did. Others felt the Department should use its public visibility to promote public acceptability of participating in these activities. A variety of actions were suggested.

All felt the Department should develop partnerships with the state news media to publicize hunting, fishing and trapping as enjoyable outdoor sports. Specific suggestions included developing television and radio programming focusing on Wisconsin and producing frequent "skills" articles in the Natural Resources Magazine, the *EE News*, the *Wisconsin Outdoors Report* and *VOICE*.

Views were mixed on the development of Skills Center facilities as specific locations to teach skills. Most felt the Sandhill Skills Center is a good project and felt this center should be maintained. However, some felt that Sandhill was primarily attracting youth who would hunt anyway, and that Sandhill is located too far from southern and eastern Wisconsin population centers. When Department staff explained that the Sandhill Skills Center was designed to serve as a pilot and model for skills training, most voiced strong support and suggested modest enhancements to try to attract more novice hunters. Nearly all surveyed felt that Sandhill fulfills a very useful role as a highly visible Department commitment to the future of hunting and fishing.

Construction of new Skills Centers was explored and the comments received indicated the Department should conduct skills training activities and educational hunts using existing facilities and Department lands rather than building new centers. Using existing facilities will allow the skills program to be made more widely available throughout the state. Once a skills center is constructed, it is necessary to bring the participants to the center. Many respondents felt this would limit participation and application of skills training in the state. However, after some experience with skills training, certain use patterns may develop which may be enhanced by construction of a new facility. In the interim some felt it would be better to dedicate staff in the Southeast and Lake Michigan districts to outreach to organizations interested in teaching skills.

1) The Department will develop improved partnerships with the state news media to publicize hunting and fishing as enjoyable outdoor activities. Specifically the Department will:

   a) Explore the concept of working with producers of Wisconsin-oriented outdoors radio and television shows to present segments on department hunting and fishing skills and related management programs. Such partnerships will bring outdoor skills information to many potential outdoor users and will be accessible by most everyone in the state.

   Timetable: 1994-95 to develop programming

   b) Develop partnerships with state news media. For example, the *Milwaukee Sentinel* is exploring ways to work with schools and youth organizations to promote a "Kid's Day" at their annual sports show. The Department will provide staff contacts and information to assist such initiatives.

   Timetable: Initiated with 1994 Sports Show.

   c) Increase the visibility of hunting, fishing and trapping skills in Department publications. *Wisconsin Natural Resources* magazine has already announced an initiative to put a skills related article in each issue of the magazine. Appeals for articles have been made to participants in this project and to state organizations through the *VOICE* newsletter.

   Timetable: Initiate with current volume and issue of *Wisconsin Natural Resources* magazine.

   d) Sponsor the 1995 Governor's Symposium on North America's Hunting Heritage. This is a national conference which Governor Thompson has agreed to host and is scheduled for August 28-31, 1995 in Green Bay. Up to 600 attendees are expected from the U.S. and Canada, with associated national media coverage. Hosting this conference is a strong public signal of support for hunting and fishing skills.

   Timetable: Planning and preparation initiated January 1994 and will continue through all of 1994 and 1995 and until the conference.

2) The Department will continue the Sandhill Outdoor Skills program and develop skills programs focused on hunting, fishing and trapping for use at existing club and Department facilities throughout the state. Special emphasis will be placed on new programming in the southeast and Fox River Valley.

   a) The Sandhill Skills center program will be expanded through additional funding for Limited Term Employees and supplies.

   Timetable: 1995-97 biennial budget.

   b) Skills programming for Southeast Wisconsin and the Fox River Valley will include selecting sites in conjunction with expanded use of Department properties as described in Program Area I.

   Timetable: Initiate in 1994-95

Background

Between June, 1993 and March 1994, the Department of Natural Resources internal working committee for the Skills Initiative, called the "Skills Team," met and conducted fact finding and public opinion activities. The following is a summary of the Team's procedures and findings.

I. Procedures:

- Contacted all other states and attempted to identify what they are doing in this area.
- Obtained copies of materials used by various organizations and states in teaching hunting, fishing and trapping skills to assess the quality and quantity of existing materials already available.
- Identified what the Department of Natural Resources is now doing in this area.
- Distributed a brief survey to over 5,000 active hunter, angler and trapper education instructors and other sportsmen and women to ask what they think the Department of Natural Resources should consider when planning this program.
- Held two listening sessions in October, 1993 with a wide variety of organizations and sportsmen and women to obtain face-to-face feedback from interested persons on this subject.
- Formed a "kitchen cabinet" of invited active hunting, fishing and trapping instructors to serve as an informal group to provide advice and critique of the Skills Team progress.
- Met with the Department of Public Instruction's Environmental Education Coordinator to discuss role of that department and potential public school involvement.

II. Findings

A) Outdoor Skills activity varies widely in other states. All have active hunter safety/beginning hunter education courses. Many have introductory fishing programs. Few appear to be approaching this subject as formally as Wisconsin intends to.

Conclusion: Wisconsin would clearly be a leading state (if not the leading state) after this new own program is organized and operating.

B) Many outdoor skills-related educational resources already exist. Organizations such as the National Rifle Association, The Shooting Sports Foundation, 4-H, The Sport Fishing Institute, and The Isaac Walton League, as well as a few state conservation departments, produce publications designed to teach people how to hunt, fish and trap. Much of this material is high quality and readily available to Wisconsin upon request. Additionally, a large number of commercially produced books, magazines, and self-help audio and video tapes on all facets of hunting and fishing are available at most sporting goods outlets such as Gander Mountain.

Conclusion: Wisconsin does not need to produce its own original materials. It can use what has already been produced and customize it as necessary. This will save time and money and allow specific activities to get up and running more rapidly.

C) The Department is already becoming actively involved in promoting hunting, fishing and trapping skills. Mandatory hunter education alone reaches 30,000 people, mostly youths, each year. A list of some other activities are:

- Angler Education Workshops—1,300 instructors and over 5,000 students trained.
- Project WILD—active in all of Wisconsin's 428 school districts.
- Hooked on Fishing, Not on Drugs.
- "Pathways to Fishing"—sponsored by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and private partners.
- "Fishing Has No Boundaries"—225 participated in Hayward in 1992.
- National Fishing Week and Free Fishing Weekend in Wisconsin.
- Fishing clinics and events sponsored by sports clubs.
- Sandhill Outdoors Skills Center.
- Turkey Hunter Education—reaches 2,000 annually.

- Mandatory Trapper Education in partnership with the Wisconsin Trappers Association.
- New waterfowl and goose hunter education programs under development in 1992-93.
- State Parks actively promote Free Fishing Weekend, fishing clinics, Bong pheasant hunting, fish and wildlife natural history.

Many clubs, civic groups and individuals conduct hunting and fishing clinics and similar types of events. Some hunter education instructors go the extra mile and get their students into practical hands-on field experiences for a day. In Milwaukee, every year over 4,000 youths attend fishing clinics sponsored by a few avid sportsmen and women. Clearly, many people share a deep and sincere interest in teaching kids how to hunt, fish and trap. With so many private individuals instructing kids and novice adults, the Department doesn't need, nor should it try to take on the entire burden of producing, conducting and sponsoring an outdoor skills program by itself. It must build upon and encourage the volunteer spirit that is so ingrained in Wisconsin's sportswomen and men.

Conclusion: The Department already has a number of excellent activities that can be used as a firm base on which to build and expand the Outdoor Skills program. A large number of volunteers already exist to help move any new activities forward. Wisconsin sportswomen and men appear ready to do more to promote the future of hunting, fishing and trapping in this state.

D) The questionnaire, the two listening sessions and the two meetings of the kitchen cabinet produced useful information indicating what Wisconsin sportsmen and women agree that the Department should sponsor this program. The major comments received in response to the survey questions are:

Question: What do you think are the greatest barriers to Wisconsin youth learning and practicing traditional outdoor skills like hunting, fishing and trapping?

Answers:

- Change in family structure and loss of role models or mentors .
- Lack of opportunities—decreased access to land, travel problems.
- Competing interests—more demands on young people's time.
- Anti-hunting movement—change in societal values.
- Poor education in resource management—non-management education.
- Prohibitive costs of participation—license fees and equipment.
- Complicated regulations—game and fish laws hard to understand.

Question: What do you think the Department of Natural Resources can best do to help assure all interested Wisconsin youth have access to learning and practicing outdoor skills?

Answers:

- Appeal to clubs—the Department of Natural Resources should use clubs, don't go it alone.
- Provide physical support—use of Department lands and existing facilities, skills centers, materials.
- Provide financial support—consider a small grants program.
- Examine current cost and regulation barriers to participation.
- Encourage a mentor system—big brother/sister type of program.
- The Department needs to be more visible in its support of youth hunting, fishing, and trapping.
- Work within the school system—opinions were mixed on this due to the already many demands placed on schools.

Conclusion: Wisconsin sportsmen and women provided consistent themes for the Department to act on. These findings should greatly help the Department develop an effective and customer focused program. It was pointed out, however, that need still exists to talk with young people themselves and see what their views are w. those of adults. Thus far only adults have been surveyed.

E) Dr. Dennis Yockers, Environmental Education Consultant with the Department of Public Instruction discussed the role of the public school system with Skills Team co-chairs Steve Miller and Tom Thoresen. Mandatory requirements for skills training would not be supported by the school systems as schools are already overburdened with mandates. Many physical education teachers and some science teachers now build skills training into their curriculums. This is largely due to personal interest. Mr. Yockers felt working with this group of instructors will produce tangible benefits. He also advised to identify successful programs and instructors and publicize these successes to other teachers.

Reaching the public school system with pro-management messages was repeatedly mentioned by people surveyed. A large number felt The Department should be more involved with schools and offered suggestions. Many agreed with Dr. Yockers that mandates would be unpopular with schools. The complex problem of teenagers and guns was also mentioned as a likely roadblock for urban schools. A number of respondents felt getting hunting skills into northern and rural schools is more feasible than in urban schools. Fishing was viewed as a neutral social issue and likely to be very popular in urban situations with access to fishable waters.

Conclusion: The public school systems of the state are probably not the best places to teach hunting, fishing and trapping skills per se. However, the Department can work better with the Department of Public Instruction and the Cooperative Education Service Agencies (CESAs) to assure that scientifically sound resource management which properly discusses the role of using resources, such as for hunting and fishing, is better supported, if not promoted, in the school systems. New school education initiatives by Department staff in Law Enforcement and Forestry are two good examples.

G) Other Conclusions:

Liability. Liability insurance for clubs and organizations to conduct various types of clinics on public or private lands is an important issue for event sponsors. At least one county has prevented use of its lands for fishing clinics due to a concern over liability. Department attorneys are continuing to investigate solutions to this issue.

Skills Centers. A number of respondents felt the Department should build, or cost share, the construction of more outdoor skills centers such as the one at Sandhill Wildlife Area. Many of these respondents indicated future skills centers should focus primarily on the Milwaukee and the Green Bay-Fox River Valley metro regions to be close to large numbers of people. Others noted that skills centers are costly to develop and operate and feel its better to encourage individual clubs to use their facilities located in local communities rather than rely on a few regional centers.

Department of Natural Resources Role. Respondents felt the Department should serve as a clearinghouse for information, and let the clubs and organizations do the teaching. We should be an advocate and function as a hub, but the clubs and volunteers should be responsible for teaching skills. Many felt the Department needs to be more visible in its support of hunting, fishing and trapping.

Target Shooting. The need for more target shooting opportunities was another common theme, especially for those living in southeast Wisconsin. A need exists to advertise available opportunities and/or to facilitate shooting opportunities on state land. Law Enforcement and Wildlife Management staff are actively investigating possibilities.

Instructional Materials. Experienced instructors indicated that materials or courses we develop must be exciting and appeal to the short attention span of kids.

Mentoring. Mentoring was often and repeatedly mentioned as key need. Comments indicated there is little value in one day clinics or hunter safety courses unless theses events are reinforced by actually getting into the fields and streams to experience firsthand what is being taught.

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